

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 09630 250941Z

13

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TAGS: PFOR, CH, EG

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT HUSSEIN EL SHAFEI VISITS THE PRC

REF: PEKING 1119

SUMMARY: THE EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO THE PRC, AN OCCASION THE CHINESE USED TO ATTACK SUPERPOWER POLICIES IN THE MID-EAST AND TO STRESS ITS SOLIDARITY WITH EGYPT. THE DISCUSSIONS MAY HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN CHINESE AND EGYPTIAN APPROACHES TO THE MID-EAST AND OTHER ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT HUSSEIN EL SHAFEI WAS ACCORDED TOP-LEVEL TREATMENT ON HIS SEPT. 21-24 VISIT TO THE PRC, INCLUDING A LONG MEETING WITH MAO TSE-TUNG. HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH MAO, CHOU EN-LAI, AND OTHER CHINESE LEADERS WERE CHARACTERIZED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 HONG K 09630 250941Z

CHINESE AS "CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY," AND CHOU AT ONE POINT REFERRED

TO THEIR RELATIONSHIP AS "FRATERNAL," A TERM NORMALLY RESERVED FOR FRIENDLY COMMUNIST LEADERS. AT A BANQUET HELD SEPT 21 IN VICE PRESIDENT SHAFEI'S HONOR, CHOU PRAISED EGYPT FOR ITS STRUGGLE AGAINST "ISRAELI AGGRESSION AS WELL AS FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND SUBVERSION." HE ALSO ELABORATED ON THE CHINESE VIEW THAT THE "SUPER-POWERS" HAD SUPPORTED ISRAEL IN LAUNCHING THE 1967 WAR AND WERE CONSTANTLY "DEALING BEHIND THE BACKS" OF THE ARAB PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THE PRESENT "NO WAR, NO PEACE" SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BOTH MAO AND CHOU EMPHASIZED PRC SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT SADAT AND HIS POLICIES.

2. IN HIS SPEECH AT THE SAME BANQUET, EL SHAFEI HINTED AT THE PROBLEM POSED BY US-SOVIET DETENTS AS THE "COMPLICATED INTERPLAY OF DOMINANT INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS." IN THIS REGARD, HE SAID THAT CHINA OCCUPIED " AN OUTSTANDING POSITION FOR THE THIRD WORLD," THE COUNTRIES OF WHICH HAVE " FOLLOWED THE RECENT CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION WITH GREAT WORRY AND UNEASINESS."

3. COMMENT: SINO-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS HAVE BEEN IMPROVING SLOWLY SINCE SADAT EXPELLED SOVIET ADVISERS FROM EGYPT LAST YEAR, AN INCIDENT THE CHINESE NOW CITE AS AN "EXCELLENT ILLUSTRATION" THAT THE ARABS HAVE " SEEN THROUGH THE DESPICABLE ACTS OF THE SOVIET REVISIONISTS" IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THIS VISIT MAY HAVE ACCELERATED THE WARMING TREND BY FURTHER NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE RECEPTION GIVEN EL SHAFEI AND PRC PRAISE OF PRESIDENT SADAT COULD TRANSLATE TO GREATER CHINESE ACQUIESCENCE IN EGYPT'S DIPLOMATIC POSITIONS IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CHINESE

APPEAR TO HAVE FOUND A RECEPTIVE LISTENER IN EL SHAFEI FOR THEIR ANTI-SUPERPOWER HEGEMONY LINE. NCNA REPORTED IN JULY THAT THE EGYPTIAN VICE PRESIDENT HAD SAID THAT SOVIET AND US INTERESTS "CONVERGE ON OPPOSING OUR FUTURE EXISTENCE" AND HIS BANQUET REMARKS ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD CERTAINLY BE WELCOME TO THE CHINESE.

4. PRC MILITARY AID TO EGYPT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. THE HONG KONG STANDARD (SEPT 20) QUOTED DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE AS SAYING THAT THE EGYPTIANS HOPED TO CONCLUDE AN ARMS AND TECHNICAL AID AGREEMENT DURING EL SHAFEI'S VISIT TO THE PRC. THE CHINESE MAY HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE SOME LIMITED AID, SUCH AS TRAINING, BUT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 HONG K 09630 250941Z

THE QUESTION OF THE PRC SHOULDERING A MAJOR MILITARY AID ROLE IN EGYPT PROBABLY DID NOT ARISE.
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